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ABSTRACT OF THREE PAPERS READ AT THE ORIENTAL CONGRESS.*

ON THE NABATAEAN INSCRIPTIONS IN THE SINAITIC PENINSULA.

Whereas the number of Nabataean inscriptions copied by previous travelers scarcely comes up to 300, Prof. Euting succeeded last spring in adding 700 to the collection. He achieved this success simply because he traveled as an Arab, and climbed barefooted along the rocks in places overlooked by other collectors. Also of many inscriptions previously known he brought home better copies and squeezes yielding the novel and important result that some of the inscriptions were found to be dated. Thus, one showing the year 126, "being the year of the three emperors," agrees according to the era of Bosra, which commences in the year 111 A. D., with 237 of our era. The other bears the date 85 (= A. D. 196). As compared with Glaser's S. Arabian inscriptions, these Nabataean inscriptions are not important on account of their age any more than by their contents, for they mostly convey only greetings and names. But they furnish valuable material for tracing the history of the origin of Arabic writing. The writers of those stone records were, in his opinion, neither shepherds nor pilgrims, but merchants who, while returning from a caravan journey (perhaps from S. Arabia to Petra), found a temporary resting for their camels in these valleys so rich in pasturage. These merchants, well acquainted with writing, would while away their time by inscribing their names upon the rocks, with greetings to those who might follow in their wake.

PROF. J. EUTING.

SO-CALLED KAPPADOKIAN CUNEIFORM TABLETS.

In 1881 Mr. Pinches drew attention to two Cuneiform tablets, said to come from Kappadokia, one of which was in the British Museum, the other in the Louvre. They were written in a peculiar form of Cuneiform script, and did not seem to be in the Assyrian language; Mr. Pinches concluded therefore that they represented the ancient language of Kappadokia. The following year Prof. Ramsay was starting on a tour of exploration in eastern Asia Minor, and I asked him to inquire for Cuneiform tablets. His inquiries proved fruitless, however; but just before he left Kaisariyeh he noticed some tablets in a shop which he bought for a small sum of money. On his return to England, he handed them over to me. I found that they were similar to the two tablets published by Mr.

* From *Trübner's Record*. No. 247.

Pinches, and published transliterations of them in the *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*, November, 1883. The tablets are now in the British Museum.

Since then I have myself purchased some Kappadokian texts, others have been obtained by Dr. Peters for the University of Pennsylvania, while more than twenty are in the collection of M. Golénischeff at Petersburg. The latter are mostly in a very perfect condition, and as some of them are written in the more ordinary type of cuneiform, a comparison of the latter with what may be termed the Kappadokian script has enabled M. Golénischeff and myself to identify the Kappadokian characters to which a false value or no value at all had previously been assigned. As soon as the true values of the characters were ascertained, I found that the language of the tablets was an Assyrian dialect, which presented several phonetic peculiarities and contained words which are probably of foreign origin. The phonetic peculiarities agreed with those of certain of the Tel el-Amarna texts from Northern Syria, as, for instance, the substitution of *Gimēl* for *Ḳôph*. Moreover, the forms of the characters resemble those of the Syrian tablets from Tel el-Amarna, and since the Kappadokian tablets contain phrases which are common in the Tel el-Amarna texts, but are unknown in Assyrian of later date, we may conclude that the library from which they are derived was founded in the same age as that of the Tel el-Amarna collection. It was probably situated in the country called "Khanu the greater," by the Assyrians, mention of which is made in a letter of Assur-yuballidh of Assyria to the Egyptian king.

A large proportion of the proper names occurring in the Kappadokian texts are compounded with the name of Assur, and so imply that the library belonged to an Assyrian colony. Some of the foreign names found in them are said to be those of *gari* or "strangers." The title of *limmu* is also met with. All the tablets I have examined relate to commercial transactions, principally to the lending of money. One of them is a quittance for the receipt of a large amount of lead.

REV. A. H. SAYCE, M. A.

ON SOME LATER BABYLONIAN INSCRIPTIONS.

The Rev. J. N. Strassmaier, S. J., laid before the meeting a small collection of Babylonian inscriptions and made a few remarks upon them. The collection contained one inscription of *Marduk-aplu-iddin* (722-710 B. C.), one of *Sargon* (710-705 B. C.) three of *Esarhaddon* (681-667 B. C.), three of *Sumas-sum-ukin* (667-647 B. C.), four of *Kandalanu* (Kineladanos of the Canon of Ptolemæus, 647-625 B. C.) four of *Labasi-Marduk*, the son of Neriglissar (556 B. C.), six of *Xerxes* (485-464 B. C.), ten of *Artaxerxes* (464-423 B. C.), a letter of Nûr to his brother Iddin-Bel from the year 164 of the Seleucide era (= 148 B. C.), and a small inscription in Babylonian characters, but apparently in a new language, hitherto unknown. The texts with a transliteration will appear in the Transactions of the Congress.

REV. J. N. STRASSMAIER.